

Education is one of the most important gifts our society can give to its people in helping them fulfill their human potential. Especially in our modern world, adequate communication skills are essential. Education and training to promote literacy are central to our efforts to improve the lives of all people, and guarantee their basic human rights. Every illiterate adult is an indictment of us all.

In our own nation, and in nations across the world, significant efforts have been made to advance literacy, and bring its benefits to every man and woman. Our concern and dedication to this cause have brought results, but there still remains great progress to be made. Around the world, eight hundred million people lack effective reading or writing skills.

For the past 12 years, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization has set aside September 8 as Literacy Day. The United States has always joined with other nations in recognizing the need to advance literacy among people everywhere, to promote our cherished human rights.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 8, 1978, as International Literacy Day, and I call upon the people of the United States to assess and strengthen our commitment to eliminating illiteracy both at home and abroad, recognizing that in so doing we are helping people everywhere open a gateway to many other human rights as well.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and third.

JIMMY CARTER

Proclamation 4590

August 25, 1978

Women's Equality Day, 1978

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

August 26, 1978, is the 58th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing that the right of United States citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the Federal government or any state on account of sex.

This was the successful culmination of the struggle of the American Women's Suffrage movement. The right to vote, to participate in the process of framing the laws under which we all live, is fundamental. But it was only the first step in achieving full equality for women. The late Dr. Alice Paul realized this, drafted the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 and had it introduced in Congress over a period of 49 years, until it passed on March 22, 1972.

Women have made substantial progress toward full equality in recent years, partly as a result of the national debate on the Equal Rights Amendment, which has made many people aware of existing injustices. Despite this progress, strong action is still needed to guarantee women full equality of opportunity.

I personally believe that ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment can be the single most important step in guaranteeing all Americans—both women and men—

their rights under the United States Constitution. This major step toward full equality for women has already been taken by 35 states, representing seventy-two percent of the population of this Nation. Only three more states must ratify the Equal Rights Amendment before it becomes a part of the Constitution. I believe this is too important and far-reaching an issue for arbitrary time barriers to limit full debate and an ultimate decision that truly reflects the will of the American people. In a society that is free, democratic and humane, there can be no time limit on equality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim August 26, 1978, as Women's Equality Day and do hereby call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I further urge all our people to dedicate themselves anew to the goal of achieving equal rights for women under the law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 25th day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and third.

JIMMY CARTER

Proclamation 4591 •

September 1, 1978

National Day of Prayer, 1978

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Nation, perhaps more than any other, has always held a special cognizance of the gifts of the Creator. We were founded upon a belief in, and reverence for, the liberty of the human spirit under God and the equality of all people before the Almighty. Regardless of our individual conceptions of the Divine, Americans have always sought from Providence the help and guidance necessary to live justly and to build a better world for all who share this planet.

Today we face challenges equal to any in our history. Few generations have been given such opportunities for good or ill on earth. We approach our responsibility confidently, but with sobering awareness that God's sea is very great, and our ship, infinitely small.

From time to time we should turn to the Almighty for help and guidance, as we have done throughout our Nation's two hundred and three years. In humility and reverence, we should pause from our daily activities to thank our Creator for the bountiful goodness that imbues our lives, and to ask for His blessing in the days ahead.

Recognizing this, the Congress by joint resolution approved April 17, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 185; 66 Stat. 64) has called upon the President to set aside a suitable day each year as a National Day of Prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Saturday, October 7, 1978, as National Day of Prayer. I ask all Americans to join with me on that day in asking God's help that we may see and understand our responsibilities and discharge them with wisdom, strength, and patience.